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ABSTRACT

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of American Indian life. Even though tribes have recently taken a great deal of initiative in establishing community libraries in conjunction with tribal community centers, they have encountered problems of training staff in Indian libraries. Isolation and lack of funds, committment, and trained Indian persons are the fundamental problems in providing library services to many Indian people. Therefore, a series of 11 guides have been developed to provide initial direction and alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing Indian library and information systems. Guide 11 of the series briefly explains the types and methods of training which have worked in Indian training programs. Suggestions are also made on how to develop an Indian training program. The guide discusses: (1) assessing training needs; (2) planning a program to meet these needs; (3) implementing the training program; and (4) evaluating the training program. (NQ)

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by

Lotsee Smith

Guide Number 11

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PREFACE

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of Indian life. Individuals, organizations, and tribes have come to the decision that libraries and the information services that they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. These goals may vary widely, from improved access to education, cultural information, information on available social services, to leisure reading. They are all based in a component or institution designed to process information - a library.

As yet, only limited resources are available to meet this fast growing demand. Funding must usually be garnered from other programs. Professionally qualified Indian librarians and trained Indian technicians are in critically short supply. Books and other informational resources still contain racist information. Experience in developing programs and services which meet the local community's needs is slight. Specific sensitivity to Indian ways and alternatives is just developing as library and information services develop in Indian communities.

The purpose of these guides is to provide initial direction and provide alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing indian library and information systems. Each guide discusses basic policies, initial steps, or discreet activities that appear to be essential to successful Indian library service. Each guide gives the reader basic direction and alternatives for development in his locale.

The reader is strongly advised to recognize these guides for what they are - ideas and programs that have been successful in the communities where they are used. They will not solve all the problems of Indian library service. They will provide the reader with some ideas, programs, and concepts to be considered in light of informational needs in the specific Indian community to be served.

Three basic types of information are presented in the guides: societal coping skills, basic considerations for implementation; and descriptions of services unique or critical to Indian libraries. These guides are supplemented by the Appalachian Adult Education Center's, Library Service Guides. The excellent Appalachian guides deal primarily with services in small communities.

Coping skills are given in two guides, (#'s 1 and 2). Organization and implementation will be discussed in five of the guides (#0,3,9,10, & 11) which cover: funding, organization, assessing needs, materials selection, and training. Five guides will discuss services unique or critical to Indian Library Service (#4,5,6,7, & 8). These guides cover: cataloging, urban services, adult education, program elements, and information services.

Charles Townley, Editor

ED108789

In-Service Training in Indian Libraries

Lotsee Smith

Guide 11

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I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Indian Libraries — As used in this document will mean any library that predominantly serves American Indians regardless of the agency that supports it. This will include public, tribal or BIA school libraries and tribal community libraries on the reservation.

Library — The term library will be used as a comprehensive term meaning a place which might also be known locally as a Learning Center, a Cultural Center or by any one of a variety of titles.

Paraprofessional — A term used in this document to mean a non-library science degreed person but one who has some training in library skills. Related terms are "aides" or "technicians".

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Problems of training staff in Indian libraries will, of course, vary from one situation to another; however, there are many commonalities. Some of these are:

1) The lack if Indian persons trained as professional librarians.

The American Library Association lists only about 24 American Indian professional librarians in the U.S..

2) Few Indian people consider the field of librarianship as a career choice.

Reasons for this include the fact that, many Indians rarely come in contact with professional librarians and if they do the librarian is not Indian. Therefore they lack role models.

To attain the status of "professional" librarian usually requires at least a Master's degree. The number of Indians that attain a Bachelor's degree are statistically a small percent of the total Indian population and those that obtain a Master's degree are much smaller yet. So, the chances of them attending Library School are very small. (Many Library Schools are trying without success to recruit Indians). The expense of obtaining a Master's degree is another inhibiting factor.

3) Job opportunities for librarians on the reservations have been extremely limited in the past.

Many Indian people want to return to the reservation after completing their education, but jobs available to them are few. The two sources of jobs for librarians would be the schools and more recently the community library.

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In the past, most schools on the reservation have been operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs which usually does not employ librarians as part of the staff. Frequently the schools are small and located in isolated communities and finding a professional librarian to employ is often a unproductive task.

Even though tribes have recently taken a great deal of initiative in establishing community libraries in conjunction with tribal community centers, the salary expected by a professional librarian would be far more than the tribe can afford.

In summary, isolation, lack of funds, lack of committment and lack of trained Indian persons are the fundamental problems in providing library services to many Indian people.

III. ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS

A. Gathering Information

In assessing training needs one must begin by gathering pertinent information. What information is pertinent will depend on a variety of factors. Some considerations are:

1) What are some basic characteristics of the Indian population to be served?

   a) Is it rural or urban?
   b) Is it concentrated or scattered?
   c) Is it predominently youthful, mature, or mixed ages?
   d) Is it sufficiently large to support the salary of specifically trained person?
   e) Does it WANT library services?

2) Are there job opportunities for a person trained in librarianship?

   a) If so, where are they and what level of training will they support? (The job opportunities may very well dictate the type and amount of training needed)

3) What kinds of information and service are needed?

4) Are there needs for special services? (Such as to pre-school children in a Day Care Center, or to support Adult Education programs, or to provide materials for Dropout Prevention programs, etc.)

Methods of gathering information may include:

1) Surveying target group.

   It is suggested that a mail survey not be used as returns are apt to be disappointing. A survey may be taken by means of a structured interview. A poll might be taken at tribal meetings.

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(2) Compiling statistical data

Statistical data bases may be available at State Universities or at State government offices.

These statistics will enable the inquirer to develop a community profile which will indicate educational levels, employment percentages, ages, etc.

3) Interviewing interested persons

Interviews should be conducted with tribal and school officials to determine the extent of their commitment toward library services. In any given situation there may be others who could give the interviewer insight into training needs.

Information should also be collected about the training "Agency". (The training "Agency" might be a University, a State Library or some other institution). This is necessary in order to determine, if they are not previously known, what its limitations and capabilities are. As a specific example: Can a University offer resident credit for courses taught in the field? or, is college credit of any advantage to the trainee?

B. Sorting Information

Once information is gathered it will need to be sorted or catagorized. This will provide a much clearer picture of what the training needs are. For example, the collected data may reveal that 80% of the target group want a community library (where none exists). It should indicate what kind of services are wanted. These catagories should help form the basis of a training program.

C. Determining Skills Needed

The community profile plus the data gathered directly from those persons who will be receiving services combined with the knowledge of terminal performance will be needed. This assumes that a person is going to be trained to work in a particular community or locale. This also assumes that it is more important to train a person to fit the job than it is to fit the job to the person. Basic skills in librarianship, such as those of selection, cataloging, and reference for example are common to any basic training program. The types of services to be rendered may vary, however, and may demand more creative, imaginative interdisciplinary kinds of training than the typical library school curriculum permits. For example, the knowledge of Adult Basic Education programs would be an asset to the "librarian".

One methodical approach to determining what skills are needed would be to do a task analysis of duties performed by persons working in Indian libraries. The tasks could be catagorized and a set of competencies can then be delineated. This

implies a university of skills which may not be a practical solution to training needs for a particular site.

D. Obtaining Tribal Input

Obtaining tribal input is absolutely essential. It is often not an easy task. The tribal governor or chairman is ultimately responsible for decisions that will involve tribal members but tribes vary greatly in their delegation of authority. Some tribes have Education Divisions with jurisdiction over community and school educational program. If so, the head of this Division can greatly assist in identifying local training needs and in depicting the functions of the library as related to tribal needs.

If a training program is going to directly involve an Indian community then a first step is to locate the appropraite tribal official and obtain his sanction before proceeding. This means listening to the tribal perception of "library" needs. It may involve discussion as to the pros and cons of training and should reveal the level of interest and commitment toward libraries. The "trainer" should be prepared to present to tribal people a rationale for a training program, i.e., of what advantage will the training program be to the tribe; what use can be made of the trainee's skills, etc.

IV. PLANNING A PROGRAM TO MEET NEEDS

A. Determining Level of Training

Information gathered in "assessing Training Needs" will provide the basis for the design of a training program. If one can ascertain what the library goals and objectives are for given communities then a set of competencies can be developed which will assure that the trainee will attain the skills necessary to achieve these stated goals and objectives.

Levels of training may be viewed simplictically as either (1) Professional or (2) Paraprofessional. For the purpose of this document, only the paraprofessional level of training will be discussed assuming that a professional level of training would be within the confines of a regular academic Library Science/Media program. While a professional level of training is desirable for any person who manages a library one cannot always realistically expect this level of training for persons employed in unique situations. For the reasons mentioned previously in this guide other factors take precedence.

The training program must include certain basic library skills, e.g., selection, reference, cataloging, and classification. Equally important, perhaps, are skills in the production of audiovisual materials and in the preservation of historical, and cultural materials (which may relate more to anthropology than to library science).

Even with a paraprofessional level of training there may be some advantages for the trainee if the training program is degree orientated. One possibility to explore in relation to this is the AA (Associate of Arts) degree offered by some institutions for 2 year programs. Degrees and academic credit are related to certification programs (school and public library). If certification is a goal then this must be a consideration in the program.

If academic credit is offered with the training program but is not degree oriented, it is wise to make sure that the credits can be applied toward a degree. It's very likely that some of the trainees will want to continue their education to a higher level.

In summary, the level of training should reflect the needs of the community. It should enable the trainee to develop the library and its services to their fullest potential regardless of degree or non-degree considerations but if possible it should accomodate the upward mobility potential of the trainee.

B. Methods of Training

At least two methods of training can be examined. One is special program which brings trainees to a training institution for a given period of time. This method is easier on the trainer but it may impose a burden upon the trainee. The advantages of this method include: (1) the availability of facilities, equipment and materials (2) the facilitation of the granting of regular college credit hours and, (3) the availibility of instructors. The disadvantages are primarily those encountered by the trainee. These include (1) lack of appropriate housing (2) financial hardships (3) problems of child care, travel, time and distance and (4) the usual hassle presented by bureaucratic organizations.

A second method is training on-site. This method will initially present more problems to the trainers than the traditional methods but offers a greater probability success for the trainee.

Suggestions for implementing these methods are:

(a) check training institution procedures and regulations to be sure an on-site program is permissable. If it is not, initiate necessary procedures to facilitate this type of program.

(b) identify sites in Indian communities where library facilities exist but have no trained librarian.

(c) discuss training program with appropriate authorities (see section IIID) and try to obtain a commitment to employ the trainees in the library upon completion of the program.

(d) Locate potential trainees (see section V B).

The advantages of an on-site training program include: (1) larger numbers of competent trainees available for selection, (2) trainees who know the community, the language, the customs, and the cultural aspects of Indian communities, (3) The problems of finance, childcare, travel, time, housing, etc. will be greatly reduced (4) a greater innovation on the part of the trainees because they are cognizant of the relevance of the training to their own community.

Disadvantages include:

(1) Facilities, materials and equipment may be inadequate.

(2) Instructors must travel long distances and good instructors who are willing to do this are limited in number.

(3) Temporary on-site housing for the instructor may need to be obtained.

(4) The lack of willingness by the training institution to offer college credit for on-site programs may require extensive paper work and manipulation.

(5) The amount of time it takes to coordinate training programs at remote sites.

The on-site method can be flexible in meeting specific needs. Course content can be carefully planned to include problem solving activities related to local situations. The opportunity for the trainee to immediately put into practice what he/she is learning encourages meaningful experiences.

C. Determining Criteria for Selection of Trainees

Criteria for trainees entering the program can be based on a number of factors some of which are more intuitive or implicit rather than explicit. Some of these are: (1) an evident commitment to staying in the community, (2) an expressed interest in librarianship, (3) potential for future employment in the Indian community, (4) an experience background which indicates an ability to work well with people. Additional, more pragmatic criteria might be: (a) previous education, such as college courses, (b) current employment in either the tribal or school system so that the likelihood of remaining employed is maximized.

Motivation and related aspects are of the most fundamental criteria used but are ones on which subjective judgment must be made.

D. Obtaining Financial Support

Funds to support a training program are most probably going to be from federal sources. Title II B of the Higher

Education Act has provided money for exemplary training programs in all parts of the country. The Department of Labor also has training funds as does Title IV of the Indian Education Act. One of the guides in this series cites many funding sources (including Foundations) for this type of training program.

Other sources of funds to explore include State Libraries, individual Tribes, Universities, and State Departments of Education.

V. IMPLEMENTING THE TRAINING PROGRAM

A. Hiring Staff Personnel

Any instructional program is only as good as the instructor. In hiring staff to work in Indian communities two aspects are of equal importance. One lies in the Cognitive Domain and the other in the Affective Domain. Competency and knowledge in librarianship is mandatory but this is no more important than is sensitivity, awareness, thoughtfulness, sincerity, responsiveness, enthusiasm and understanding. Indian people are quick to perceive attitudes and feeling of others and react accordingly. If staff people are to be successful in their training program they must first be successful in their relationships with the Indian community. A Director must assess staff capabilities in these dual roles before hiring them.

B. Recruiting Trainees

One distinct advantage of an on-site training program is that recruitment of trainees is much simpler. Many more persons are available if they do not have to leave their community. Once the program has been established, the objectives of the training program and the criteria for selection of trainees have been made known to tribal and/or library officials it is probably in the best interests of all concerned if the selection of the trainee is done locally. Several reasons for this are: (1) local people can make better judgments about trainees because they know them. Hence, they would select persons who have demonstrated interest, motivation, etc.,. (2) The trainees ability to get along with other local people will have been demonstrated, (3) the trainees committment to the local community will be well known, (4) tribal politics play a very active role in community situations. By asking tribal authorities to do the selection, the training institution is more apt to receive tribal cooperation.

C. Scheduling Training Sessions

Scheduling should be flexible to accommodate those persons who may be working. A recommended part of the curriculum is a practicum. This will permit the instructor to work on an individual basis with each trainee and actually present a tutorial situation which can easily be scheduled for the trainees convenience. It is recommended that other formal class sessions

be held in 3 hour blocks weekly. This minimizes travel and housing problems for the instructor as well as permits in depth study for the trainees.

D. Communication

Maintaining communication between the Director of the training program and tribal officials, school personnel, staff, trainees, and University or training institution personnel is a complicated task. The telephone is probably the most convenient and useful tool in maintaining communication but it's also expensive.

Another useful device is a newsletter. This approach offers the possibility of reaching a braoder group of interested persons but it also runs the risk of being overlooked or tossed out and never read.

Personal vists are the most effective method of communicating but present problems of time, scheduling and the expense of traveling.

VI. EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

A. Summative Evaluation

A summative evaluation procedure should be conducted. It will be an indicator of the degree of success achieved by the training program. It should measure the degree to which the training programs goals and objectives were achieved. It may appraise changes in attitudes on the part of the trainee and the users. It may also reveal unintended consequences. It should also pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of the program.

B. Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation procedures should be conducted periodically. The procedures may be both formal and informal.

Informal evaluation may take the form of discussions, conversations, observations or written comments solicited from participants.

Formal evaluation procedures such as questionaires, tests for competencies,attitude surveys, statements with rating scales or other modes may be used effectively. A format which periodically permits the trainees to evaluate the trainer (and vice versa) should not be overlooked.

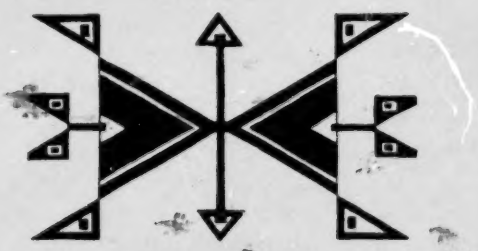
The major purpose of formative evaluation is to provide feedback for the trainer who may see a need to alter the program based upon these intermittent evaluative processes.

VII. CONTINUING EDUCATION

One of the negative aspects of any special training program is that it is limited in its time span (often not more than one year) and when the program is completed there is little or not professional assistance for the trainee. A method of following through with the continued availability of profession advice and technical assistance is needed.

Workshops are an effective way of reinforcing or expanding skills for the minimally trained paraprofessional. Workshops may be offered at little or no cost through State Libraries or State Education Associations. Institutions of higher education often offer them upon demand. Bureau of Indian Affairs conducts numerous training sessions in some areas. Tribes may also contract with individuals or institutions to provide needed training.

The trainees should also be encouraged to join local, state and national professional organizations. Reading professional literature is one way they can keep up or at least be aware of new development materials and current activities.



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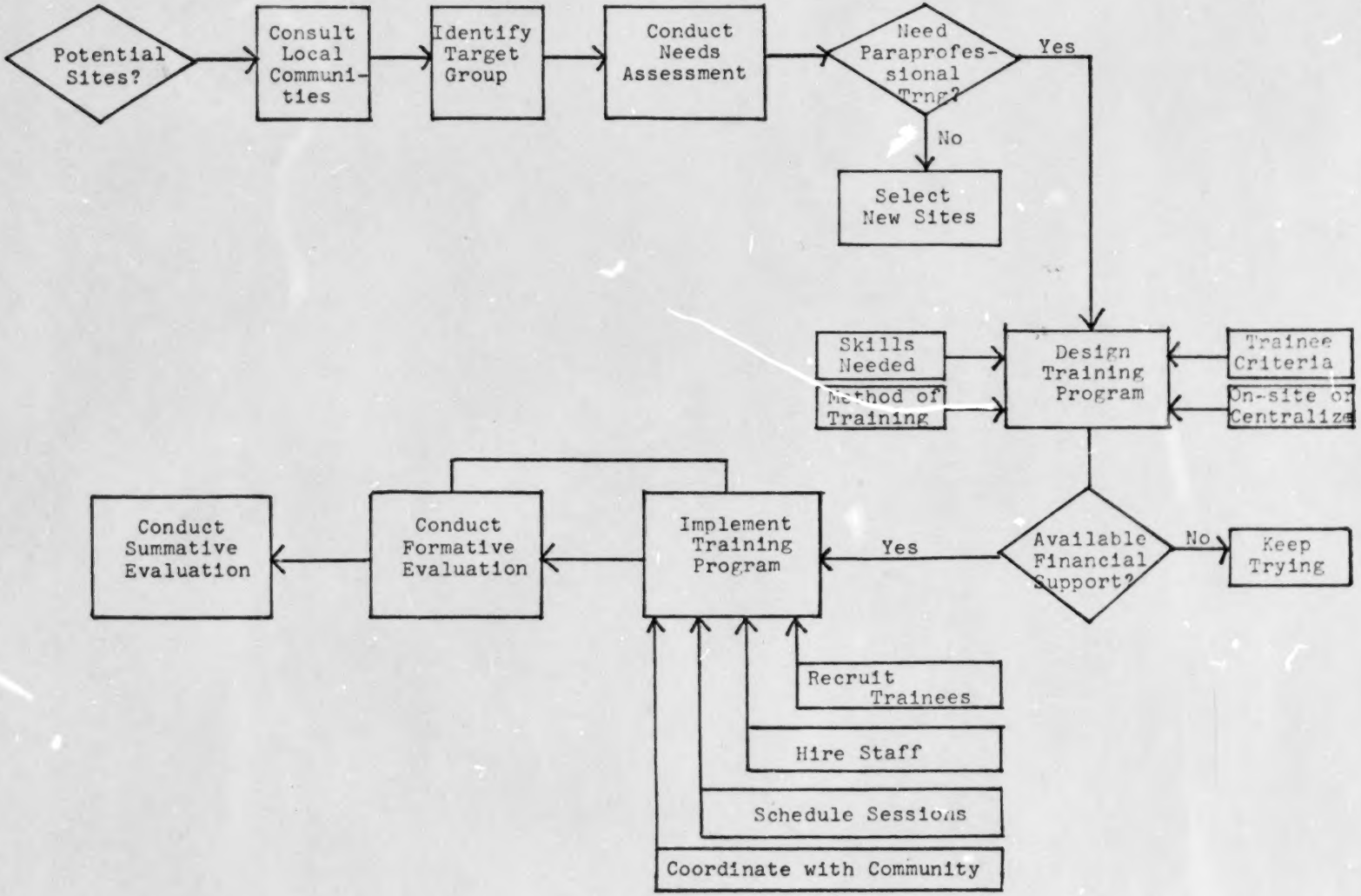
A PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING MODEL



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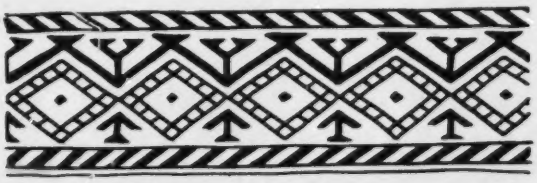

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